

# Orthodox Christianity



Our Lady of Vladimir

# Orthodoxy

- Orthodoxy is the mystic sect of Christianity
- There are various types of Orthodoxy including Serbian Orthodox, Romanian Orthodox, Bulgarian Orthodox, etc.
- The “people of the book” (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) all have mystic sects of their religion
- Mystic sects emphasize the connection of man to their respective gods

# The Origins of Orthodoxy in the Balkans

- In the year 863 brothers Cyril and Methodius went on a mission to convert the Slavs, but the Slavic language at the time was without a script. In order to give the Slavs the Bible, Cyril and Methodius created a script making the Bible accessible to them.
- They helped to “turn the vernacular of the Slavs into the Cyrillic alphabet.”
- The original script was Glagolitic, but was eventually changed to Cyrillic, an alphabet based upon Greek
- Slavic was one of only three languages accepted for liturgy in medieval Christendom



# glagolitic

The Old Church Slavonic Glagolitic Alphabet							
ⱦ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
a	b	v	g	d	ε	ž	dz
Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
z	i	i	g	k	l	m	n
Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
o	p	r	s	t	u	f	x(kh)
Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
o	ts	č	š	št	w/ə	i	y
Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ	Ɱ
æ/e	yu	ě	yě	ǫ	yǫ	f	i/v

# cyrillic

Аа Бб Вв Гг  
 Дд Ее Ёё Жж  
 Зз Ии й Кк Лл  
 Мм Нн Оо Пп  
 Рр Сс Тт Уу  
 Фф Хх Цц  
 Шш Щщ Ъ ъ  
 Ыы Ьь  
 Ээ Юю Яя

# Predominately Orthodox Balkan Countries



Door Gates  
Budva, Montenegro



Hram Svetog Sava  
Belgrade, Serbia

- Bulgaria
- Serbia
- Montenegro
- Macedonia,  
Former Yugoslav  
Republic of

# Orthodox Traditions

- *The Bible*, for the Orthodox, is used as a way of interpreting God's word
- Interpretations are done by the Church as the inspiration of God
- Orthodoxy accepts all Christian creeds ratified before the *schism* of the 11<sup>th</sup> century
- They also accept the *Seven Ecumenical Councils* (323-787)
- The hope exists that the eighth ecumenical council will happen, which will unite the church
- Central to Orthodoxy is the icon, on which man is supposed to focus his worship, its meanings, and its mysteries, onto a greater reality

# The Seven Ecumenical Councils

- [www.patriarchate.org/councils/ecumenical\\_councils\\_html](http://www.patriarchate.org/councils/ecumenical_councils_html)



# The Nature of God

- God transcends beyond our imagination and is viewed as an enigma for human understanding
- God is *trinitarian*, and contains within himself three persons
- The Father, Son, and The Holy Ghost contain other individuals in themselves as well, and therefore the relationship is a mystery

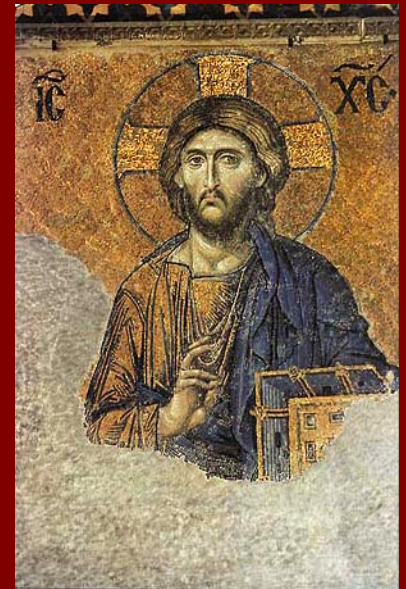


**The Holy Trinity, Andrei Rublev**



# The Nature of God -- Jesus

- Jesus Christ represents God's decision to become one of his own
- Jesus also represents the fact that God has given man free will and the choice to do as he pleases
- Jesus offers humanity an example of how to live a perfect life.
- Jesus is also associated with mysteries, namely, incarnation, transfiguration, and the resurrection
- Jesus' life provides the foundations for the Christian faith



# The Worship Service – Liturgy

- Orthodox services remain unchanged from medieval times
- During the service, which can be hours long, worshippers stand for its entirety
- The services are conducted in Church Slavic (Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian)
- The altar separates the worshippers by an *iconostasis*, or an icon screen

# The Iconostasis

The wall that separates the spiritual realms from that of man



Iconostasis from the Kremlin

# The Church Calendar

- Church calendars are divided into saints' days and holy days
- The church does not recognize the calendar reform of 1582 that changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar
- There is a 13 day difference between the two calendars

# The Church Calendar

- [www.oca.org/pages/orth\\_chri/Feasts-and-Saints/April](http://www.oca.org/pages/orth_chri/Feasts-and-Saints/April)